Victor Teboul's Journey as a Jewish Refugee from Egypt

Victor Teboul : Entry in Brill Encyclopedia.

By Aimée Israel-Pelletier, Department of Modern Languages, University of Texas at Arlington

Victor Teboul was born in Alexandria, Egypt on May 9, 1945. He was expelled from Egypt and arrived in France with his family on December 25, 1956*. The family had seven days to leave Egypt. The reason they were given for the expulsion was their possession of a French passport. In France, the family lived under the auspices of the French government at the convent of Notre-Dame-de-l'Osier in the Isère from January 1957 to May 1957. They resided in the convent alongside approximately one hundred Jewish families who had also been expelled from Egypt. In July 1963, the family

immigrated to Montreal. Teboul received his Doctorat from the Université de Montréal, his Masters from McGill University, and his Bachelor of Arts from Concordia University.

Teboul is a French-Canadian writer, professor, and the founder and director, since 2002, of the online magazine, Tolerance. His essay, **Mythe et images du Juif au Québec** (1977), provoked heated public debate about the role of the Jew in Canadian life and literature. In contrast to other writers, Teboul sees exile less as a state of suffering than as a chance to strengthen Jewish identity. He is the author of two novels, **Que Dieu vous garde de l'homme silencieux quand il se met soudain à parler** (May God Help you when the Silent Man Begins to Speak), 1999, and **La lente découverte de l'étrangeté** (The Slow Unrelenting Discovery of Strangeness), 2002.

His novels are fictional but they borrow freely from his own life. They expand on his experiences to the point where, as he states, they reflect lives not his own and histories he could not have known first hand. For Teboul, writing is the opportunity to create a place of one's own for Jews within the larger context, be it political, cultural, literary, or institutional. There is no question of erasing distinctions between the Jew and others. Rather, as he suggests, his novelistic ambition is the insertion of the Jew, particularly the Sephardic experience, in the history of literature and within Quebecois literature.

His main character, and alter-ego, Maurice Ben Haïm, is conceived as a representative figure of the French-Canadian Jew. Maurice has a place in the continuous history of the Jews of Quebec, a history that has taken place before he arrived. In a way then, Teboul asserts, there is a history that precedes him and with which he must work and interract.

This is the same situation as when a Jew arrives, for example, in France. When he arrives there, Teboul adds, he identifies immediately with the history of the Jews in France even if he, this Jew coming from elsewhere, has just arrived. This way, Teboul contends, we are not strangers in a strange land, some of our own were here before and prepared the place for us. Teboul's work reflects a positive attitude regarding exile and a nuanced understanding of the modern Jew living, as he often is, outside his motherland and speaking in languages other than his mother tongue.

Victor Teboul Selected Bibliography

Teboul, Victor. Mythe et images du Juif au Québec. Montreal : Editions de Lagrave, 1977.

_____. Le Jour. Émergence du libéralisme moderne au Québec : Editions Hurtubise HMH, Cahiers du Quebec, 1984.

----------. Que Dieu vous garde de l'homme silencieux quand il se met soudain à parler. Quebec : Éditions Les Intouchables, 1999.

----------. René Lévesque et la communauté juive. Quebec : Éditions Les Intouchables, 2001.

----------. La Lente découverte de l'étrangeté. Quebec : Éditions Les Intouchables, 2002.

Contributor details

Aimée Israel-Pelletier. Department of Modern Languages University of Texas at Arlington Box 19557 Arlington, Tx 76012

Lemma Title

Teboul, Victor

Subject Words

Teboul, Victor; Egypt; Alexandria; France; Notre-Dame-de-l'Osier; Canada; Montreal; Writer; Novelist; Essayist; French-Canadian Literature; Maurice Ben-Haïm; Exile.

Micropedia (Abstract)

Teboul was born in Alexandria, Egypt in 1945 and expelled in 1956. He is a Canadian citizen. He is a novelist, essayist, founder and director of the online magazine Tolerance. He writes in French. His literary ambition is the insertion of the Jew, particularly the Sephardic Jew, in Canadian literature.

Article published on March 2010.

Image. Victor Teboul, Private Collection : A group of Jewish refugees from Egypt at Notre-Dame-de-l'Osier, Isère, France, 1957. In the picture, Victor is wearing a hat and is kneeling beside Father Margan's dog (right). He was 11 years old. The family had left Alexandria a few months earlier, in December 1956. Please do not reproduce image without Victor Teboul's permission. Contact victorteboul@videotron.ca

* To be more precise, The family left Alexandria on December 28, 1956 on board of the S/S Aeolia and arrived at Marseilles on January 4,1957 and at Notre-Dame-de-l'Osier during the night, by bus.

Source : https://search.worldcat.org/fr/title/5862831882

Teboul, Victor

Auteurs: Aimée Israel-Pelletier, Bril

Text of the article in Brill Encyclopedia:

Sommaire: Teboul, Victor Victor Teboul was born in Alexandria on May 9, 1945. When he was eleven, his family was expelled from Egypt on the grounds that they had a French passport and given seven days to leave the country. They arrived in France on December 25, 1956 and from January 1957 to May 1957 lived, under the auspices of the French government, at the convent of Notre-Dame-de-l'Osier in the Isère with a hundred other expelled Egyptian Jewish families. In July 1963, the Tebouls emigrated to Canada, where in due course Victor earned a B.A. degree at Concordia University, a master's degree at McGill University, and a doctorate at the Université de Montréal. Teboul, who writes in French, is a novelist, essayist, professor, and the founder and director, since 2002, of the online magazine Tolerance . His essay " Mythe et images du Juif au Québec" (1977) provoked heated public debate about the role of the Jew in Canadian life and literature. In contrast to other writers, Teboul sees exile less as a state of suffering than as a chance to strengthen Jewish identity. He is the author of two novels, Que Dieu vous garde de l'homme silencieux quand il se met soudain à parler (1999; May God Help You When the Silent Man Begins to Speak) and La lente découverte de l'étrangeté (2002; The Slow Unrelenting Discovery of Strangeness). His novels are fiction, but they borrow freely from his own life, expanding on his experiences to the point where, as he states, they reflect lives not his own and histories he could not have known first-hand. For Teboul, writing is an opportunity to create a place of one's own for Jews within a larger context, whether political, cultural, literary, or institutional. There is no question of erasing the distinctions between the Jew and others. Rather, his novelistic ambition is to insert the Jew, and particularly the Sephardic Jew and experience, into the literature of French

Canada. Teboul's main character and alter-ego, Maurice Ben Haïm, is conceived as a figure typifying the Québecois Jew. Maurice has a place in the ongoing history of the Jews of Quebec that began long before he arrived, for he works and interacts, as he must, with the history that preceded him. Similarly, when a Jew goes to France, say, on arriving there he identifies immediately with the history of the Jews in France even though, as an individual coming from someplace else, he has only just arrived. And thus, Teboul contends, Jews are never strangers in a strange land, because wherever they may be, some of their own were there before and prepared the ground for them. Teboul's work takes a positive view of exile and expounds a nuanced understanding of the modern Jew living, as so often, outside his motherland and speaking in languages other than his mother tongue.

Aimée Israel-Pelletier Victor Teboul

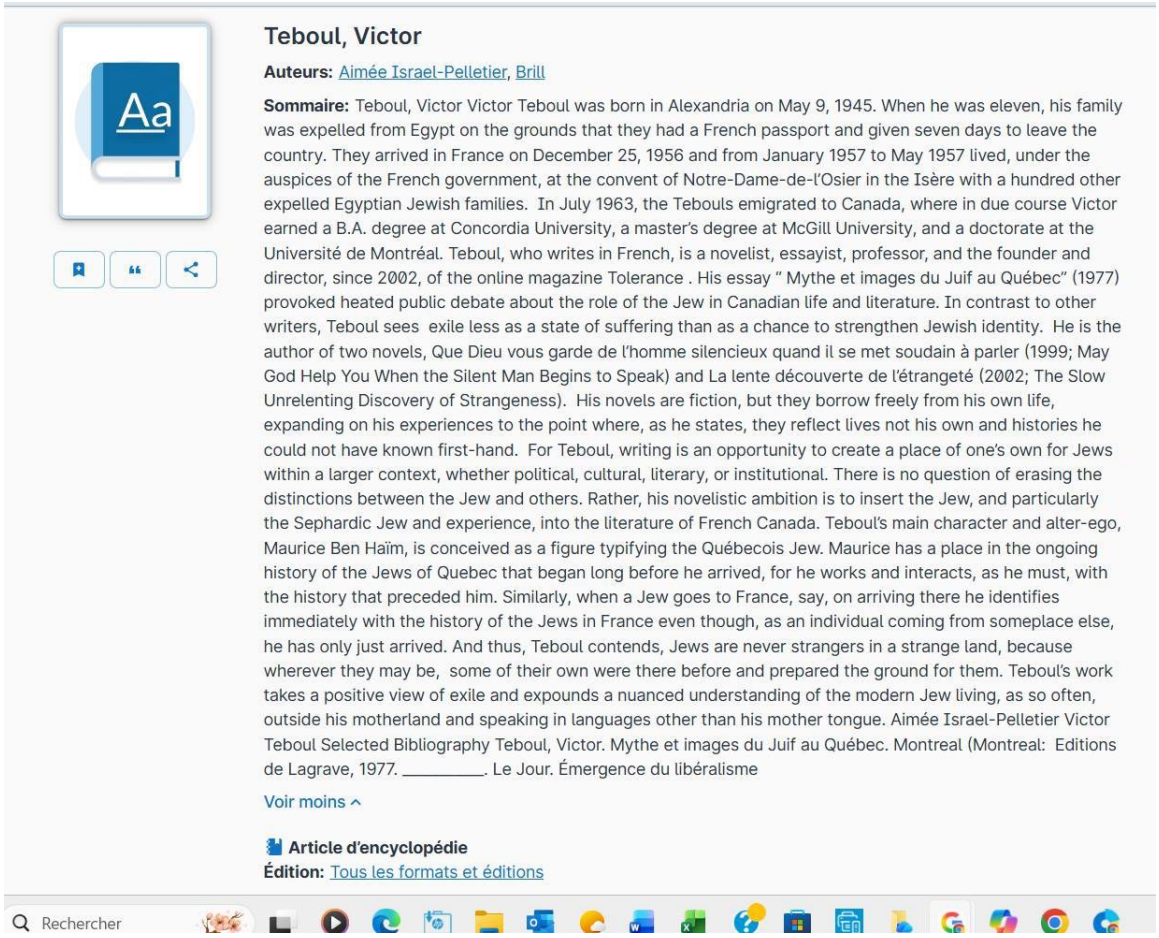
Selected Bibliography

Teboul, Victor. Mythe et images du Juif au Québec. Montreal (Montreal: Editions de Lagrave, 1977. _____. Le Jour. Émergence du libéralisme

https://search.worldcat.org/fr/title/5862831882

Entry Victor Teboul Encyclopedia of Jews in the Islamic World

Screenshot of Brill's Entry (World Catalog) :



Also on World Catalog

For articles and studies published in English on Victor Teboul's work, please click Here.

For studies published in French on Victor Teboul's work, please click HERE

For articles published in English by Victor Teboul, HERE

For works published by Victor Teboul since the publication of the above article, please click HERE.

For works available in ebook format, please click HERE.

Victor Teboul's works are available at libraries worldwide, for more info, please tap on WorldCat.org, Here.

Image. Victor Teboul, Private Collection : A group of Jewish refugees from Egypt at Notre-Dame-de-l'Osier, Isère, France, 1957. In the picture, I am wearing a hat and am kneeling beside Father Margan's dog (right). I was 11 years old. We had left Alexandria a few months earlier, in December 1956. - Victor Teboul. Please do not reproduce image without Victor Teboul’s permission.

Posted on Archive.org on April 12, 2026.